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PROPHECY.

"In fifty years all Europe will be either Cossack or Republican." So prophesied the most sagacious of modern politicians, without any pretence to Divine inspiration, other than the inspiration of genius, when calculating the prospects of the future by the light of his past experience. "All genius is prophetic, inasmuch as it grasps general laws, universal in their range, and invariable in their operation, the application of which to particular events constitutes prediction. The Hebrew prophets were sagacious observers of human nature, and made very shrewd calculations of the future progress of events, by a careful induction of the invariable laws of nature from the history of the past. But there was nothing supernatural in that. Every poet, philosopher, and politician is more or less of a prophet. Men of profound genius are rare in any department of science, and ignorance ascribes to supernatural inspiration the sagacity derived from extensive observation; but philosophy traces to the same source the inspiration of Moses and Solon, of Apollo and Ezekiel, of Newton and Napoleon." So says the modern sceptic.

This prediction of Napoleon's is a fair specimen of the oracles of human sagacity, as well as a test of the wisdom of those philosophers who risk their eternal destiny on the sagacity of a man ignorant of his own fate one week ahead, and peril their souls on the chance that, ten years hence—when the affairs of Europe may be of as little consequence to them as they are now to Napoleon—Europe will bring forth from the throes of revolution either a despotism or a republic. No chance, it seems, of a birth of twins falsifying this sage prediction.

Suppose, however, that during the six thousand years during which statesmen have gambled with the liberties of mankind, as many as half-a-dozen should have guessed the shape of some coming event from the shadow which it cast before it—as Cayotte is reported to have predicted the fate of Charles for Louis the XVI., and the atrocities of the Parisian rabble during the Reign of Terror—what then? Is such a guess of any use to the world? Does it, or should it, command any respect when uttered? Does

it profess to come from the Disposer of all events, as his seal authenticating any revelation of moral duty to man?

O yes! We are told by men who could not read one of Apollo's oracles to save their lives, nor recite one of Isaiah's prophecies to save their souls—Apollo's oracles no less than Isaiah's were inspired. Could such persons be prevailed upon to read carefully any single prophetic book of Scripture, with the historic facts to which it refers, or even the briefest abridgment of these facts, such as that contained in Scott's, or the Comprehensive Commentary, they would not thus expose their ignorance alike of heathen and Christian oracles.

The differences between them are too numerous to be easily enumerated. The oracles of the heathen are always sources of gain to their prophets. The ancient Pythoness must have a hecatomb, the writing medium a dollar, and the modern Pythoness of the platform a dime. But under the inspiration of God even a Balaam becomes honest, and the leprosy of Naaman marks the sordid Gehazi and his seed for ever.

The oracles of the heathen are always immoral in their tendency. From the first spiritual communication through the serpent medium in the tree of knowledge, down to the last spiritual marriage rapped out by the oracle, they are all in favor of pride, ambition, lying, lust, and murder. The oracles of God begin with a prohibition of curiosity, pride, covetousness, and theft: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And they are uniformly of the same tenor, forbidding, reproving, threatening vice, and encouraging virtue, down to the last: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

This last mark of falsehood belongs to all heathen oracles, from the first utterance by the serpent down to the last response rapped out by the medium. Take any one heathen oracle of which we have any definite account—and the number is very small—and you will find that, if it is not "as equivocal as Apollo," *it is false*. For instance, infidels very confidently refer to the augury of Vettius Valens, that, "if it be true, as historians say, that Romulus saw twelve vultures at the founding of Rome, that signified that it should exist twelve centuries." It very properly begins with an if,

for the story of Romulus and the vultures is exceedingly apocryphal. But whether the story be false or no, the augury certainly is. If it refers to the material city then building, it was false. Brennus, the Gaul, burned it to the ground before it was four centuries old. If it prophesied the permanence of the political constitution, every school-boy knows that within twelve centuries half a dozen revolutions falsified the augury. If it referred to the ultimate duration of the city of that name, or of the Roman people, it is self-evidently false; for now, after the lapse of twenty-six centuries, Rome is larger, its territory wider, and its people more numerous, than for centuries after Romulus saw the twelve vultures. Yet men who have read Roman history present Vettius Valens as a prophet. It is written, "He frustrateth the tokens of the liars."

But it is objected that "the prophecies of Scripture are as obscure as the oracles; are all wrapped up in symbolical language; that many of them have a double meaning; that no two interpreters are agreed as to the meaning of the unfulfilled predictions; and that no man can certainly foretell any future event by means of them." The objection proceeds on a total mistake of the nature and design of prophecy, which is not to unveil the future for the gratification of your curiosity, but to give you direction in your present duty—precisely the reverse of the oracles referred to, which proposed to tell their votaries what would happen—but rarely condescended to direct them how to behave themselves so that things might happen well. The larger part of the prophecies of Scripture is taken up with directions to men how to regulate their conduct, rather than with information how God means to regulate his. There is just as much of the latter as is sufficient to show us that the God who gave the Bible governs the world, and even that always urges the same moral lesson: "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruit of his doings." "Woe to the wicked; it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Whenever a vision relates to what God will do in the distant future, it is dark and mysterious; but whenever any directions are given necessary for our immediate duty, then the "vision is written and made plain on tables, *that he may run that readeth it.*" The possessors of a clearly engrossed title-deed have surely no reason to complain that the president has chosen that his seal appended to it shall consist of a device, which,

by reason of its being hard to read and harder to imitate, secures both himself and them against forgery. The double meaning of some prophecies is a double check. So far from resembling the equivocations of heathen oracles, by taking either of two opposite events for a fulfilment, they require both of two corresponding ones; and some prophecies, like a master key, open several successive events, and thus show that the same mind planned both locks and key. When the prediction is fulfilled all mystery vanishes, and men see plainly that thus it was written—that is to say, men who look—for the man who will not open his eyes will never see any thing that it concerns him to know. But the man who thinks that it concerns him so much to know what God will do with the world a hundred years after he is dead, that unless the prophecies of the Bible are all made plain to him, he will neither read God's word nor obey his law, may go on his own way. We expound no mysteries to such persons; for it is written, "None of the wicked shall understand."

As to the objection taken from the symbolical language of prophecy, and which seems to a number of our modern critics so weighty that they remove to the purely mythologic ground every thing "couched in symbolical language," and account nothing to be prediction unless "literal history written in advance"—I would merely ask, How is it possible to reveal heavenly things to earth-born men but by earthly figures? Do you know a single word in your own, or any other language to express a spiritual state or mental operation, that is not the name of some material state or physical operation, used symbolically? Heart, soul, spirit, idea, memory, imagination, inclination, &c., every one of them a figure of speech—a symbol. Nay, is there a letter in your own or in any other alphabet, that was not originally a picture of something? I demand to know in what way God or man could teach you to know anything you have never seen, but by either showing you a picture of it, or telling you what it is like? That is simply by type or symbol; and these are the only possible media of conveying heavenly truth, or future history to our minds. When, therefore, the sceptic insists that prophecy be given literally in the style of history written in advance, he simply requires that God would make it utterly unintelligible. We can gather clear and definite ideas from the significant hieroglyphics of symbolic language, but the literalities of history written in advance would be worse to

decipher than the arrow-headed inscriptions of Nineveh. Just imagine to yourself Alexander the Great reading Guizot, instead of Daniel; or Hildreth, as being less mysterious than Ezekiel; and meeting, for instance, such a record as this: "In the year of Christ 1847, the United States conquered Mexico, and annexed California." "In the year of Christ—what new Olympiad may that be?" he would say. "The United States of course means the States of the Achaen League, but on what shore of the Euxine may Mexico and California be found?" What information could Aristotle gather from the record that, "In 1857, the Transatlantic Telegraph was in operation?" Could all the augurs in the seven-hilled city have expounded to Julius Cæsar the famous despatch, if intercepted in prophetic vision, "Sebastopol was evacuated last night, after enduring for three days an infernal fire of shot and shell?" Nay, to diminish the vista to even two or three centuries, what could Oliver Cromwell, aided by the whole Westminster Assembly, have made of a prophetic vision of a single newspaper paragraph of history written in advance, to inform them that, "Three companies of dragoons came down last night from Berwick to Southampton, by a special train, traveling $54\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, including stoppages, and embarked immediately on arrival. The fleet put to sea at noon, in the face of a full gale from the S. W.?" Why, the intelligible part of this single paragraph would seem to them more impossible, and the unintelligible part more absurd, than all the mysterious symbols of the Apocalypse.

The world has accepted God's symbols thousands of years ago, and it is too late in the day for our reformers to propose new laws of thought and forms of speech, to the human race. David's prophetic lyrics, and Christ's lovely parables, Isaiah's celestial anthems and Ezekiel's glorious symbols, Solomon's terse Proverbs, will be recited and admired, ages after the foggy abstractions of mystified metaphysicians have vanished from the earth. The Thirst of Passion, The Cup of Pleasure, The Fountain of the Water of Life, The Blood of Murder, the Rod of Chastisement, The Iron Scepter, The Fire of Wrath, The Balance of Righteousness, The Sword of Justice, The Wheels of Providence, The Conservative Mountains, and The Raging Seas of Anarchy, The Golden, Brazen, and Iron Ages, will reflect their images in Truth's Mirror, and photograph their lessons on Memory's Tablet, while the mists of the "positive philosophy," "the absolute," and "the conditioned," float past unheeded, to the land of forgetfulness. God's prophetic symbols are the glorious

embodiments of living truths, while man's philosophic abstractions are the melancholy ghosts of expiring nonsense.

The prophetic symbols are sufficiently plain to be distinctly intelligible *after* the fulfillment, as we shall presently see; sufficiently obscure to baffle presumptuous curiosity before it. Had they been so written as to be fully intelligible beforehand, they must have interfered with man's free agency, by causing their own fulfillment. They hide the future sufficiently to make man feel his ignorance; they reveal enough to encourage faith in the God who rules it.

The revelation of future events, however, is not the principal design of the prophecies of the Bible; they bear witness to God's powerful present influence over the world now. For God's prophecy is not merely his foretelling something which will certainly happen at some future time, but over which he has no control—as an astronomer foretells an eclipse of the sun, but can neither hasten nor hinder it—but it is his revealing of a part of his plan of this world's affairs, to show that God, and not man, is the sovereign of this world. For this purpose he tells beforehand the actions which wicked men, of their own free will, will commit contrary to his law, and the measures he will take to thwart their designs, and fulfill his own. Nay, he declares he will so manage matters that without their knowledge, and even contrary to their intentions, heathen armies and infidel scoffers shall serve his purposes and show his power; while yet they are as perfectly voluntary in all their movements as if they, and not God, governed the world. Every fulfilled prophecy thus becomes an instance and evidence of a supernatural government; and is to a thinking mind a greater miracle than casting mountains into the sea. The style of prophecy corresponds to this design. It is not by any means apologetic or supplicating; but, on the contrary, majestic, convincing, and terrifying to the ungodly.

"Remember this and show yourselves men.

"Bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.

"For I am God, and there is none else.

"I am God, and there is none like me.

"Declaring the end from the beginning,

"And from ancient times the things that are not yet done,

"Saying, 'MY COUNSEL SHALL STAND, AND I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE.'" *

* Isaiah, chap. 46: 8-11.

Infidels feel the power of this manifestation of God in his word; and are driven to every possible denial of the fact, and evasion of the argument drawn from it. They feel instinctively that Bible prophecies are far more than mere predictions. They would rather endow every human being on earth with the power of predicting the future than allow the God of heaven that power of ruling the present which these prophecies assert. Hence the attempt to admit their predictive truth, and yet deny their Divine authority, by ascribing them to human sagacity.

Transatlantic steam navigation has produced a remarkable change in the tone of infidel writers and speakers in regard to the prophecies of the Bible. You could not converse long with an infidel on this subject, a few years ago, until he would assure you, with all confidence, that the prophecies were all written after their fulfillment, and so were not prophecies at all. But now that travelers of all classes, scoffers, sailors, and doctors of divinity, scientific expeditions, and correspondents of daily newspapers, have flooded the world with undeniable attestations that many of them are receiving their fulfillment at this day, none but the most grossly ignorant and stupid attempt to deny that the prophecies of the Bible were written thousands of years since, and that many of them have since been accomplished; and that so many have been fulfilled that their accomplishment cannot be ascribed to chance. But the force of the argument for the Divine inspiration of the prophets is met by the assertion that there is nothing supernatural in prophecy, and that it is only one form of the inspiration of genius.

Calculating securely on that profound ignorance of the Bible which characterizes their followers, modern writers inform them that "none of the prophets ever uttered any distinct, definite, unambiguous prediction of any future event which has since taken place, which a man without a miracle could not equally well predict." It is alleged that the prophecies, in predicting the overthrow of the nations of antiquity, predicted nothing beyond the ken of human sagacity, enlightened by a careful study of the experience of the past and the invariable laws of nature—that it requires no inspiration to foretell the decay of perishing things—that the invariable progress of all things, empires as well as individuals, is first upward, through a period of youthful vigor and energy, then onward through a period of ripe maturity, and then

downward, through a gradual decay and final dissolution, to the inevitable grave. The world's history is but a history of the decline and fall of nations.

I. Now, if this be true, it is an awful truth for the infidel, for *it sweeps away the last vestige of a foundation of his hope for eternity*. The only reason any unbeliever in Revelation could ever give, or that modern spiritualists do give, for their hope of a happy eternity, is the analogy of Nature—the alleged constant progress of all things toward perfection in this world. It is an awkward truth that individually we must die and the worms crawl over us; but then the wretched fate of the individual was to be compensated by the glorious progress of the race onward and ever onwards and upward—from the fungus to the frog, and from the frog to the monkey, from the monkey to the man, from the noble savage wild in woods, to the pastoral tribe; thence to the empire and the federal republic; and finally to the reign of individual and passional attraction, and union with the sum of all the intelligences of the universe, through a constant progress towards infinite perfection.

But, alas! it seems it was a false analogy, an ill-observed fact, a delusion; the course of nature is all the other way. The tendency of all perishing things is not to perfection, but to perdition; and it needs no inspiration to tell that man's loftiest towers and strongest cities and proudest empires will come to ruin; or that the most polished, powerful, and populous nations of antiquity will dwindle down into Turks, Moors, and Egyptians. Here is a fact of awful omen. Death reigns in this world of ours—death moral, social, political, and physical, has ever trampled upon man, proud man, learned man, civilized man, over all the plans of man, over every man and over every association of men, even the largest, the wisest, the mightiest. And now the infidel, having taken away our hope of help from heaven, comes with the serpent's hiss and fiendish sneer to taunt the perishing world with this miserable truism—that the tendency of every thing on earth is to perdition, and that it needs no inspiration to tell it. Truly it does not. Were that all the prophets of God had to tell us—as it is all the prophets of infidelity can prophecy—we had as little need for the one as for the other. Earthquake and hurricane, volcano and valley flood, autumn frosts and winter blasts, fever, consumption, war, and pestilence, the grave-yard and the charnel-house, the

Parthenon and the Pyramids, and the mounds of Mexico and Assyria, unite to attest this awful doom.

But what reason has the skeptic to believe that this invariable law of nature shall ever be repealed, and this inevitable progress of all things to perdition be arrested? Why may not men be as selfish and filthy, and grasping and murderous in the other world as they are in this? Why may not the course of nature be as fatal to the sinner's prosperity there, as it is here? Why may not the progress of the proud empires and spheres of futurity, be such as the skeptic declares the progress of the past to have been, so invariably towards dissolution and death, that it shall need no inspiration to predict its course downward, downward, ever downward, to endless perdition? Stand forward skeptic, and point the world to an instance in which an ungodly nation has stemmed this all-destroying torrent of ruin; or acknowledge that all you can promise the nations of the world to come, from your experience of the invariable laws of nature, is *perdition, endless perdition*.

II. It is manifest, however, that this destruction of nations and desolation of empires must have had a beginning some time or other. Nations could not perish before they had grown, nor empires be destroyed till they had accumulated; and during all this period of their growth and vigor, the experience of mankind would never lead them to predict their ruin. The sagacious observer, beholding Babylon, Nineveh, Damascus, and Tyre, growing and flourishing during a period of a thousand years past, would have no reason from such an experience to expect any thing else than a thousand years of prosperity to come. Especially impossible is it for human sagacity, enlightened by experience, to predict *unexampled* desolations—destructions such as the world had never witnessed.

Now the predictions of the Bible are predictions of unexampled desolations, and unparalleled ruin of empires. The desolation of any extensive region of the earth, or the overthrow of any great nation, was an event absolutely unknown to the world when the prophets of the Bible began to utter their predictions; unless the skeptic will allow the truth of the Bible record of the prediction and execution of the deluge, and the destruction of Sodom. War and conquest had indeed caused some provinces to change masters; one nation had made marauding invasions on others, and carried

off cattle and slaves ; but the result of the greatest military operation of which we have any record, at the commencement of the prophetic era—the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites—so far from desolating the region, or exterminating the people, had been merely to increase its productiveness, and drive its former occupants to new settlements, where at that era they were fully able to cope with their former conquerors. Whatever the experience of thirty centuries may have since taught the nations concerning the certainty of the connection between national crime and national ruin, a long suffering God had not then given any such signal examples of it, as those of which he gave warning by the prophets.

The course of the nations and cities founded after the deluge had been regularly onward and prosperous, and they were just rising to the maturity of their power and splendor when Jonah, Micah, Hosea, and Isaiah, began to pronounce their sentences. They denounced desolation and solitude against nations more populous than this continent, one of whose cities enumerated more citizens than some of our proud commonwealths, and displayed buildings, a sight of whose crumbling ruins is deemed sufficient recompense for the perils of a journey of six thousand miles. The hundred churches of Cincinnati could all have been conveniently arranged in the basement of the temple of Belus ; on the first floor our hundred thousand non-church going citizens might have assembled to listen to a lecture on spiritualism from some eloquent Chaldean soothsayer ; and the remaining seven stories would have still been open for the accommodation of the natives of the original Queen City. Every product of earth was trafficked in the markets of Tyre—a single Jewish house imported annually more gold than all the banks of this continent possess—and the whole coinage of the United States since 1793 would want a hundred millions of dollars of the value of the golden furniture of a single temple in Babylon. In fact, in the suburbs of Babylon or Nineveh, Washington or Cincinnati would have been insignificant villages ; and the stone-fronted brick palaces of Broadway and the Fifth Avenue, would make passable stables and haylofts for the mansions of Thebes or Petra.

So far, therefore, from being the teaching of experience, the calculation of sagacity, there was nothing more utterly unexampled and unparalleled than the complete desolation of any nation at the

time the prophets of Israel predicted such things. If the world has grown wiser since regarding the decline and fall of empires, it has gathered the best part of its sagacity from the prophecies.

III. The prophecies of the Bible are not vague general denunciations of natural decline and extinction to all the nations of the world, which, if they were merely the exposition of a universal *natural* law of national death, they would be—nor yet the application of any such natural and inevitable law to some particular nation, denouncing its destruction, without any specification of time, manner, instrument, or cause of its infliction. They are all the applications of *moral law*—sentences pronounced on account of national wickedness. In every case the prophecy charges the crimes, and specifies the punishment selected by the Judge of all the earth. The nations selected as examples of Divine justice are as various as their sentences are different—covering a space as long as from Eastport to San Francisco, and climes as various as those between Canada and Cuba; peopled by men of every shade of color and degree of capacity, from the negro servant of servants, to the builders of the Colosseum and the pyramids. They minutely describe, in their own expressive symbols, the nations yet unfounded and kings unborn, who should ignorantly execute the judgments of the Lord. They predict the futures of over thirty states—*no two of which are alike*, each prediction embracing a large number of minute particulars, any one of which was utterly beyond the range of human sagacity. To predict that a man will die may require no great sagacity, but to tell the year of his death, that he will die as a criminal, allege the crime for which he will be sentenced, the time, place, and manner of his execution, and the name of the sheriff who will execute the sentence, is plainly beyond the skill of man. Such is the character of Bible predictions. Zedekiah's sentence was thus pronounced; and thus, too, the sentences of nations doomed to ruin for their crimes are recorded in the Bible, that men may know that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken them. If, for instance, a prophet should declare that New York should be overturned, and become a little fishing village, and that her stones and timber, and her very dust, should be scraped off and thrown into the East River—that Philadelphia should become a swamp, and never be inhabited, from generation to generation—that Columbus should be deserted, and become a hog-pen—that Louisville should become a dry, barren desert, and New Orleans be utterly

consumed with fire, and never be built again—that learning should depart from Boston, and no travelers ever pass through it any more—that New England should become the basest of the nations, and no native American ever be President of the Union, but that it should be a spoil and a prey to the most savage tribes, and that the Russians should tread Washington under foot for a thousand years, but that God would preserve Pittsburg in the midst of destruction—and if all these things should come to pass, would any man dare to deny that the prophet spake not the dictates of human sagacity, or the calculations of genius, but the words of God?

To attempt to illustrate the Divine wisdom displayed in a system of connected predictions, covering the destiny of the nations of the world, and extending from the dawn of history to the end of time, by presenting two or three instances of the fulfillment of specific predictions, would be something like exhibiting a fragment of a column as a monument of the skill of the architect of a temple; yet, as such a fragment may excite the curiosity of the traveler to visit the structure whence it was taken, I shall present two or three prophecies in which specific predictions are given, concerning the *geographical, political, social, and religious condition* of three of the great nations of antiquity—*Egypt, Judea, and Babylon*—the fulfillment of which is spread over the surface of empires and the ruins of cities, patent to all travelers at the present hour, and abundantly attested in hundreds of volumes. An interesting collection of such testimonies will be found in *Keith on the Prophecies*; while the curious in history will find an invaluable collection of extracts from authentic historians, illustrating the specific fulfillment of prophecy in the past, in *Newton on the Prophecies*. I do earnestly hope hundreds of my young readers will purchase and peruse both these volumes.

Could human sagacity have calculated that Egypt—the most defensible country in the world, bounded on the south by inaccessible mountains, on the east by the Red Sea, on the west by the trackless, burning desert; able to defend the mouths of her river with a powerful navy, and to drown an invading army every year by the inundation of the Nile; which had not only maintained her independence, but extended her conquests for a thousand years past—Egypt, which had given learning, arts, sciences, and idolatry to half the world, and which had not risen to the height of its fame

or the extent of its influence for hundreds of years after the prediction—should be invaded, conquered, spoiled, become a prey to strangers and evermore to strangers, never have a native prince, sink into barbarism, renounce idolatry, and become famous for her desolations? Yet the Bible predictions are specific on all these matters: *“I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein by the hand of strangers. I the Lord have spoken it. Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause the images to cease out of Noph, and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.”**

Let infidels read the fulfillment of these predictions: “Such is the state of Egypt. Deprived twenty-three centuries ago of her natural proprietors, she has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Georgians, and at length the race of Tartars distinguished by the name of the Ottoman Turks. The Mamelukes, purchased as slaves and introduced as soldiers, soon usurped the power and selected a leader. If their first establishment was a singular event, their continuance is not less extraordinary; they are replaced by slaves brought from their original country.† Says Gibbon: “A more unjust and absurd constitution can not be devised than that which condemns the natives of the country to perpetual servitude under the arbitrary dominion of strangers and slaves. Yet such has been the state of Egypt above five hundred years. The most illustrious sultans of the Baharite and Beyite dynasties were themselves promoted from the Tartar and Circassian bands; and the four and twenty beys, or military chiefs, have ever been succeeded, not by their sons, but by their servants.”‡ Mehemet Ali cut off the Mamelukes, but still Egypt is ruled by the Turks, and the present ruler (Ibrahim Pasha) is a foreigner. It is needless to remind the reader that the idols are cut off. Neither the nominal Christians of Egypt, nor the iconoclastic Moslem, allow images to appear among them. The rivers, too, are drying up. In one day’s travel forty dry water-courses will be crossed in the Delta; and water-skins are needed now around the ruined cities whose walls were blockaded by Greek and Roman navies.

* Ezekiel, chap. xxx.

‡ Decline and Fall, chap. lix.

† Volney’s Travels, 1, 74, 103.

*"It shall be the basest of the kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations, for I will diminish them that they shall no more bear rule over the nations."** Every traveler will attest the truth of this prediction. The wretched peasantry are rejoiced to labor for any who will pay them five cents a day, and eager to hide the treasure in the ground from the rapacious tax-gatherer. I have seen British horses refuse to eat the meal ground from the mixture of wheat, barley, oats, lentiles, millet, and a hundred unknown seeds of weeds and collections of filth, which forms the produce of their fields. For poverty, vermin, and disease, Egypt is proverbial. Let us hear a scoffer's testimony, however: "In Egypt there is no middle class, neither nobility, clergy, merchants, nor landholders. A universal air of misery in all the traveler meets points out to him the rapacity of oppression, and the distrust attendant upon slavery. The profound ignorance of the inhabitants equally prevents them from perceiving the causes of their evils, or applying the necessary remedies. Ignorance, diffused through every class, extends its effects to every species of moral and physical knowledge. Nothing is talked of but intestine troubles, the public misery, pecuniary extortions, and bastinadoes."†

Here, then, we have conclusive proof of the fulfillment at this day of four distinct, specific, and improbable Bible predictions: concerning the country—the rulers—the religion—and the people of Egypt.

Let us note now a distinct and totally different judgment pronounced against the transgressors of another land. Pre-eminent in inflicting destruction on others, her retribution was to be extreme. Degradation and slavery were to be the portion of the learned Egyptians, but utter extinction is the doom of mighty Babylon. It is written in the Bible concerning the land where the farmer was accustomed to reap two hundred fold: *"Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest. Every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. Behold the hindermost of the nations shall be a dry land and a desert. Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate."*‡

* Ezekiel, chap. xxix.

† Jeremiah, chap. 50 and 51.

‡ Volney, I. 190.

Proofs in abundance of the fulfillment of these predictions present themselves in every volume of travels in Assyria and Chaldea. "Those splendid accounts of the Babylonian lands yielding crops of grain of two and three hundred fold, compared with the modern face of the country, afford a remarkable proof of the *singular desolation* to which it has been subjected. The canals at present can only be traced by their decayed banks. The soil of this desert consists of a hard clay, mixed with mud, which at noon becomes so heated with the sun's rays, that I found it too hot to walk over it with any degree of comfort."* "That it was at some former period in a far different state is evident from the number of canals by which it is traversed, now dry and neglected; and the quantity of heaps of earth, covered with fragments of brick and broken tiles, which are seen in every direction—the indisputable traces of former cultivation.† "The abundance of the country has vanished as clean away as if the besom of desolation had swept it from north to south; the whole land, from the outskirts of Babylon to the farthest stretch of sight, lying a melancholy waste. *Not a habitable spot appears for countless miles.*‡

As the desolation of the country was to be extraordinary, so the desolation of the city of Babylon was to be remarkable. When the prophet wrote, its walls had been raised to the height of three hundred and fifty feet, and made broad enough for six chariots to drive upon them abreast. From its hundred brazen gates issued the armies which trampled under foot the liberties of mankind, and presented their lives to the nod of a despot, who slew whom he would, and whom he would allowed to live. Twenty years' provisions were collected within its walls, and the world would not believe that an enemy could enter its gates. Nevertheless the prophets of God pronounced against it a doom of destruction as extraordinary as the pride and wickedness which procured it. Tyre, the London of Asia, was to *become a place for the spreading of nets*,§ and the infidel Volney tells us its commerce has declined to a *trifling fishery*; but even that implies some few resident inhabitants. Rabbah, of Ammon, was to become a *stable for camels and a couching place for flocks*.|| Lord Lindsay reports that "he could not sleep amidst its ruins for the bleating of sheep,

* Mignon's Travels, 31.

† Trans. Bombay Lit. Soc., i. 123.

‡ Porter's Babylonia, ii. 285.

§ Ezekiel, chap. 26.

|| Ezekiel, chap. 25.

that the dung of camels covers the ruins of its palaces, and that the only building left entire in its Acropolis is used as a sheepfold." * Yet sheepfolds imply that the tents of their Arab owners are near, and that some human beings would occasionally reside near its ruins. But desolation, solitude, and utter abandonment to the wild beasts of the desert is the specific and clearly predicted doom of the world's proud capital. The most expressive symbols are selected from the desert to portray its desertion.

"Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, nor dwell in, from generation to generation. Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their folds there; but wild beasts of the desert shall be there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there; and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant places." †

Every traveler attests the fulfillment of this strange prediction. "It is a tenantless and desolate metropolis," says Mignon, who, though fully armed, and attended by six Arabs, could not induce them by any reward to pass the night among its ruins, from their apprehension of evil spirits. So completely fulfilled is the prophecy, *"The Arabian shall not pitch his tent there."* The same voice which called camels and flocks to the palaces of Rabbah, summoned a very different class of tenants for the palaces of Babylon. Rabbah was to be a sheepfold, Babylon a menagerie of wild beasts—a very specific difference, and very improbable. One of the later Persian kings, however, after it was destroyed and deserted, repaired its walls, converted it into a vast hunting-ground, and stocked it with all manner of wild beasts; and to this day the apes of the Spice Islands, and the lions of the African deserts meet in its palaces, and howl their testimony to the truth of God's word. Sir R. K. Porter saw two majestic lions in the Mujelibé, (the ruins of the palace,) and Fraser thus describes the chambers of fallen Babylon: "There were dens of wild beasts in various places, and Mr. Rich perceived in some a strong smell, like that of a lion. Bones of sheep and other animals were seen in the cavities, with numbers of bats and owls. Here, for the first time,

* Lindsay's Travels, ii. 78, 117.

† Isaiah, chap. 13.

for the bittern and pools of water.* *The sea is come up upon Babylon, she is covered with the waves thereof.*† On the other hand it is no less specifically declared: "*Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness. Behold the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert.*"‡

But the scoffer's contradiction is a fact. God can cause the most discordant agencies to agree in effecting his purpose. Babylon is alternately an overflowed swamp from the inundations of the obstructed Euphrates, and an arid desert under the scorching rays of an eastern sun. Says Mignon: "Morasses and ponds tracked the ground in various places. For a long time after the subsiding of the Euphrates great part of this place is little better than a swamp." At another season it was "a dry waste and burning plain." Even at the same period, "one part on the western side is low and marshy, and another an arid desert."§

Another, and widely different agent, to be employed in the destruction of the great center of tyranny and idolatry, is thus specifically and definitely indicated in the prediction: "*Behold I am against thee, O destroying mountain, that destroyest all the earth; and I will stretch out my hand against thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and make of thee a burnt mountain; and they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, or a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord.*"||

"There is one fact," says Fraser, "in connection with the most remarkable of these relics, (the Birs Nimrod,) which we can not dismiss without a few more observations. All travelers who have ascended the Birs have taken notice of the singular heaps of brick-work scattered on the summit of this mound, at the foot of the remnant of the wall still standing. To the writer they appeared the most striking of all the ruins. That they have undergone the most violent action of fire is evident from the complete vitrification which has taken place in many of the masses. Yet how a heat sufficient to produce such an effect could have been applied at such a height from the ground is unaccountable. They now lie on a spot elevated two hundred feet above the plain, and must have fallen from some much more lofty position, for the structure which still remains, and of which they may be supposed originally to have formed a part, bears no marks of fire. The building originally

* Isaiah, chap. 14.

† Jeremiah, chap. 51.

‡ Jeremiah, chaps. 50 and 51.

§ Mignon, 139.

|| Jeremiah, chap. 51.

can not have contained any great proportion of combustible materials, and to produce so intense a heat by substances carried to such an elevation, would have been almost impossible, for want of space to pile them on. Nothing, we should be inclined to say, short of the most powerful action of electric fire, could have produced the complete, yet circumscribed fusion which is here observed. Although fused into a solid mass, the courses of bricks are still visible, identifying them with the standing pile above, but so hardened by the power of heat, that it is almost impossible to break off the smallest piece; and, though porous in texture, and full of air-holes and cavities, like other bricks, they require, on being submitted to the stone-cutter's lathe, the same machinery as is used to dress the hardest pebbles." *

Egypt was to be reduced to slavery and degradation, Babylonia to utter barrenness and desolation; but a different and still more incredible doom is pronounced in the Bible upon Judea and its people. The land was to be emptied of its people, and remain uncultivated, retaining all its former fertility, while the people were to be scattered over all the earth, yet never to lose their distinct nationality, nor be amalgamated with their neighbors: *"I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation; and I will bring the land unto desolation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land, even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths. † Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return and shall be eaten, as a teil tree and as an oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves. ‡ The generation to come of your children, AND THE STRANGER FROM A FAR LAND, shall say, 'Wherefore hath the Lord done thus to this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?' "* §

It is superfluous to adduce proof of the undeniable and acknowledged fulfillment of these predictions, but, as an example of the

* Fraser's Mesopotamia and Assyria, 145.

† Leviticus, chap. 26.

‡ Isaiah, chap. 6.

§ Deuteronomy, chap. 29

way in which God causes scoffers to fulfil the prophecies, let us again hear Volney: "I journeyed in the empire of the Ottomans, and traversed the provinces which were formerly the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria. I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria. This Syria, said I to myself, now almost depopulated, then contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages, and hamlets. What ever became of so many productions of the hand of man? What ever became of those ages of abundance and of life? *Great God! from whence proceed such melancholy revolutions? For what cause is the future of these countries so strikingly changed? Why are so many cities destroyed?* Why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated? A mysterious God exercises his incomprehensible judgments. He has doubtless pronounced a secret malediction against the earth. He has struck with a curse the present race of men in revenge of past generations." * The malediction is no secret to any who will read the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy; nor is the avenging of the quarrel of God's covenant confined to the sins of past generations. The philosopher who would understand the fates of cities and empires, should read the prophecies.

The word of God specifies no less distinctly and definitely the destiny of the Jewish than of the Babylonian capital, but fixes on a widely different kind of destruction. Babylon was never to be built again, but devoted to solitude—busy Tyre to become a place for spreading nets—the caravans, which once brought the wealth of India through Petra were to cease, and the doom was to "cut off him that passeth by and him that returneth." But Jerusalem, it was predicted, should long feel the miseries of a multitude of oppressors, should never enjoy the luxury of solitary woe, but "*be trodden down of the Gentiles.*" † Saracens, Tartars, Turks, and Crusaders, Gentiles from every nation of the earth, fulfilled the prediction of old, even as hosts of pilgrims from all parts of the earth do at this day.

So minute and specific are the predictions of Scripture, that the fate of particular buildings is accurately defined. One temple to the living God, and only one, raised its walls in this world, which he had made for his worship. Its frequenters perverted it from its

* Volney's Ruins of Empires, Book I.

† Luke, chap. 21.

proper use of leading them to confess their sinfulness, seek pardon through the promised Savior to whom its ceremonies pointed, and learn to be holy, as the God of that temple was holy. They hoped that the holiness of the place would screen them in the indulgence of pride, formality, and wickedness. The temple of the Lord, instead of the Lord of the temple, was the object of their veneration. But the doom went forth, "*Therefore for your sakes shall Zion be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become as heaps, and the mountain of the house like the high places of the forest.*" * History has preserved, and the Jews to this day curse, the name of the soldier, Terentius Rufus, who plowed up the foundations of the temple. It long continued in this state. But the emperor Julian the Apostate conceived the idea of falsifying the prediction of Jesus, "*Behold your house is left unto you desolate,*" † and sent his friend Alypius with a Roman army and abundant treasure, to rebuild it. The Jews flocked from all parts to assist in the work. Spades or pickaxes of silver were provided by the vanity of the rich, and the rubbish was transported in mantles of oak and purple. But they were obliged to desist from the attempt, for "horrible balls of fire breaking out from the foundations with repeated attacks, rendered the place inaccessible to the scorched workmen, and the element driving them to a distance from time to time, the enterprise was dropped." ‡ Such is the testimony of a heathen, confirmed by Jews and Christians. The enclosures of the mosque of Omar forbidding them all access to the spot on which it stood, leave it desolate to the Jews to this day.

IV. No sane man can believe that such minute and accurate predictions of various and improbable events, could be the result of human calculations; yet there is another feature of the Bible prophecies still farther removed beyond the reach of human sagacity, and that is remarkable and unaccountable *preservation amidst the general ruin*. If, as skeptics allege, destruction is the natural and inevitable doom, then preservation is supernatural and miraculous—a miracle of Divine power controlling nature; and its prediction is a miracle of Divine wisdom. Now the prophecies of the Bible contain several very definite, and widely different predictions of the preservation of people and cities from the general destruction. We shall refer in this case also to those of whose ful-

* Micah, chap. 3.

† Ammian Marcell. lib. 23, chap. 1

‡ Matthew, chap. 23.

fulfillment there can be no manner of doubt, for the facts are palpable and undeniable at the present day.

Of the Israelitish nation God predicted, that it should be a peculiar, distinct people, separate from the other nations of the world: "*Lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*"* In apparent contradiction to this separation, he further threatened to punish them for their sins, by dispersing them over the world: "*I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you.*"† *For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve; yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*"‡ It was further threatened, as if to make sure of their national destruction, "*And among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest, but the Lord shall give thee a trembling heart and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and have none assurance of thy life.*"|| Contrary to all appearances, and in spite of all this dispersion and persecution, it is predicted that Israel shall still exist as a nation, and be restored to the favor of God, and that prosperity which ever accompanies it: "*And yet, for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God.*"§

Here are four distinct predictions—of national peculiarity—universal dispersion—grievous oppression—and remarkable preservation. The fulfillment is obvious and undeniable. You need no commentary to explain it. Go into any clothing-store on Western Row, or into the synagogue in Broadway, and you will see it. The infidel is sorely perplexed to give any account of this great phenomenon. How does it happen that this singular people is dispersed over all the earth, and yet distinct and unamalgamated with any other? How does it happen that for eighteen hundred years they have resisted all the influences of nature, and all the customs of society, and all the powers of persecution, driving them towards amalgamation, and irresistible in all other instances? In the face of the power of the Chinese Empire, in spite of the

* Numbers, chap. 23.

† Leviticus, chap. 26.

‡ Amos, chap. 9.

§ Deuteronomy, chap. 32.

|| Leviticus, chap. 26.

tortures of the Spanish Inquisition, amidst the chaos of African nationalities and the fusion of American democracy, in the plains of Australia, and in the streets of San Francisco, the religion, customs, and physiognomy of the children of Israel are as distinct this day as they were three thousand years ago, when Moses wrote them in the Pentateuch, and Shishak painted them on the tombs of Medinet Abou. How does the infidel account for it? It will not do to allege the favorite story about purity of blood and Caucasian race; for the question is, How does it happen that this people, and this people alone, have kept the blood pure; while all other races are so mingled that no other race can be found pure on earth? Besides, lest any should suppose such a cause sufficient for their preservation, another nation descended from the same father and the same mother—the children of Jacob's twin brother, have utterly perished, and there is not any remaining of the house of Esau.

Human sagacity, with all the facts before its face, can not give any rational account of the causes of this anomaly. It can not tell to-day, why this people exists separate from, and scattered through all nations, from Kamschatka to New Zealand; how, then, could it foretell, three thousand years ago, this singular exception to all the laws of national existence? While the sun and moon endure, the nation of Israel shall exist as God's witness to God's word—an undeniable proof that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Take another instance of preservation, so remarkable amidst the surrounding destruction, that it arrested the attention and admiration of the author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, skeptic and scoffer though he was.

The seven churches of seven of the most considerable cities of Asia, were then, as the churches of Christ still are, the salt of the earth. Ten righteous men would have averted God's judgments from Sodom. Jesus pronounced the sentences of these churches seventeen hundred and sixty years ago, and the present condition of the cities attests the Divine authority of the record containing them. They are various and specific. Three were to be utterly destroyed. Against two no special threatening is denounced. To the remaining two promises of life and blessing are given.

Ephesus, famous for its magnificence, the busy avenue of travel,

the seat of the temple of Diana, long the residence of an apostle, and afterward of Christian bishops—"one of the eyes of Asia,"—as it stood first on the roll of cities, first receives the doom of abused privileges: "*I will remove thy candlestick out of its place, unless thou repent.*"

Says Gibbon: * "The captivity and ruin of the seven churches of Asia was consummated (by the Ottomans) A. D. 1312; and the barbarous lords of Ionia and Lydia still trample on the monuments of classic and Christian antiquity. In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, and the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelation. *The desolation is complete*, and the temple of Diana or the Church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveler."

"A few unintelligible heaps of stones," says Arundell, "with some mud cottages untenanted, are all the remains of the great city of the Ephesians. Even the sea has retired from the scene of desolation, and a pestilential morass, covered with mud and rushes, has succeeded to the waters which brought up the ships laden with merchandise from every country." Some parts of the site of the city are cultivated; and Fisk, who entered into conversation with the Greek peasants, men and women whom he found pulling up the tares and weeds from the corn, ascertained that they all belonged to *distant villages*, and came there to labor.

Had the twenty thousand patrons of the drama in the thirty-one theatres of New York, honored the theatre of Laodicea with their presence, its polite citizens would have accommodated them all on the reserved seats, retiring themselves to ten thousand less commodious sittings, and to two less gigantic theatres. While yet busy in the erection of their splendid places of public amusement, Jesus said, "*I will spew thee out of my mouth.*" "The circus and three stately theatres of Laodicea are peopled with wolves and foxes," says Gibbon.

A Lydian capitalist once deposited in the vaults of Sardis more specie than is now in circulation in this whole continent. But Jesus said, "*Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*"

"Sardis," says Gibbon, "is a miserable village." A later writer

(Durbin) tells us that the Turks say, "Every one who builds a house in Sardis dies soon, and avoid the spot." Arundell, in his account of his visit to the seven churches, says: "If I were asked what impresses the mind most strongly on beholding Sardis, I should say "its indescribable *solitude*, like the darkness of Egypt, that could be felt. So deep the solitude of the spot, once the lady of kingdoms, produces a feeling of desolate abandonment in the mind which can never be forgotten." Connect this feeling with the message of the Apocalypse to the church of Sardis, "Thou hast a name that thou livest and *art dead*, and then look around and ask, Where are the churches? Where are the Christians of Sardis? The tumuli beyond the Hermus reply, "*All dead!*"—suffering the infliction of the threatened judgment of God for the abuse of their privileges. Let the unbeliever, then, be asked, Is there no truth in prophecy?—no reality in religion?

Only twenty-seven miles north of this desolate metropolis, the manufactories of Thyatira despatch weekly to Smyrna, cloths, as famous over Asia for the brilliancy and durability of their hues as those which Lydia displayed to the admiration of the ladies of Phillippi. Two thousand two hundred Greek Christians, two hundred Armenian, and a Protestant Church under the care of the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, assemble every Sabbath to commemorate the resurrection of Him who said to the Church of Thyatira: "*I will put upon you no other burden; but that which ye have already hold fast till I come.*"

The fragrant citron still flourishes around the birth-place of Galen; but the ruins of the famous library of 200,000 manuscripts are far less durable memorials of the city of booksellers than those beautifully dressed skins, which, taking their name (*Pergamena*) from the place of their manufacture, will preserve the name and fame of Pergamos as long as parchment can preserve man's memorials or God's predictions. Though famous for fragrance, physic, and philosophy, Pergamos was infamous for idolatry, licentiousness, and persecution; yet still endeared to Jesus as the scene of the martyrdom of faithful Antipas, and the dwelling-place of a hidden church; and widely different sentences are recorded against those opposite classes. The public memorials are to perish, but the hidden word to endure. "The fanes of Jupiter and Diana, and Venus and Esculapius, (worshipped under the symbol of a live

snake,) were prostrate in the dust, and where they had not been carried away by the Turks to cut up into tombstones or pound into mortar, the Corinthian columns and the Ionic, the splendid capitals, the cornices and the pediments, all in the highest ornament, were thrown in unsightly heaps ;”* is the comment on the threatening of Jesus, *“I will fight against them—the idolaters—with the sword of my mouth.”* The 3,000 Greek and 300 Armenian Christians, and even the 10,000 Turkish inhabitants of the modern Pergamos, have received hundreds of copies of the promise, *“To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.”* But whether the hidden church of Pergamos shine forth or not, Gibbon was inaccurate in stating, in the face of facts, that “the god of Mohammed without a rival is invoked in the mosques of Pergamos and Thyatira.” God’s providence is as discriminating as his prophecy, though unbelief may overlook both.

We have noted here instances of the prediction of remarkable destruction to Sardis, Ephesus, and Laodicea—of continued existence to Pergamos and Thyatira—let us now note a prediction of remarkable escape and preservation from the universal doom. If it requires no inspiration to prophecy destruction—the universal fate of humanity, according to the infidel—surely it requires more than human skill to say that any city shall escape this universal fate, and more than human power to avert this destruction. Of Philadelphia—but twenty-five miles distant from the ruins of Sardis—Jesus said, and the Bible records the prophecy: *“I know thy works ; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie ; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly, hold that fast thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out ; and I will write*

* Macfarlane’s Seven Apocalyptic Churches.

upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name."

"Philadelphia alone," says Gibbon, "has been saved by prophecy, or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant sons defended their religion and their freedom alone for fourscore years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins—a pleasing example that the paths of honor and safety may be the same."

In the pages of this eloquent writer it would be hard to discover another instance of unqualified hearty commendation of soldiers or sufferers for Christianity and liberty, such as Gibbon here bestows on Philadelphia's valiant sons. But it was written, "*I will make them come and worship before thy feet,*" and the skeptic and scoffer must fulfill the word of Jesus; even as the unbelieving Mohammedan also does, when he writes upon it the modern name, *Aliah Sehr—The City of God. A majestic solitary pillar*, of high antiquity, arrests the eye of the traveler, and reminds the worshippers of the six modern churches of Philadelphia, of the beauty and faithfulness of the prophetic symbol. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Jesus' word shall not pass away.

Improbable to human sagacity as this preservation must have seemed, the resurrection of a fallen city is more utterly beyond man's vision. In the Bible, however, tribulation and recovery was foretold to Smyrna: "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" "The populousness of Smyrna is owing to the foreign trade of the Franks and Armenians," says the scoffer. No matter to what it is owing; he who dictated the Bible foresaw it, and made no mistake in foretelling it. Says Arundell: "This, the other eye of Asia, is still a very flourishing commercial city, one of the very first in the present Turkish empire in wealth and population, containing 130,000 inhabitants. The continued importance of Smyrna may be estimated from the fact that it is the seat of a consul from every nation in Europe. The prosperity of Smyrna is now rather on the increase than the decline, and the houses of painted wood, which were most unwor-

thy of its ancient fame and present importance, are rapidly giving way to palaces of stone rising in all directions; and probably, ere many years have passed, the modern town may not unworthily represent the ancient city, which the ancients delighted to call the crown of Ionia. Commercial activity and architectural beauty, however, are but a small part of the glorious destiny of the community to which Jesus says, "I will give thee a crown of life." Deliverance from the curse of sin, and communion with the Lord of Life, alone can secure either a nation's or an individual's immortality. Smyrna possesses the gospel of salvation. Several devoted English and American missionaries proclaim salvation to its citizens. From its printing presses thousands of copies of the word of life issue to all the various populations of the Turkish empire. A living church of Christ in Smyrna holds forth for the acceptance of the dying nations around her, that crown of life promised and granted by the word of God, not to her only, but to all who love his appearing and his kingdom.

V. This is the grand distinction of God's word of prophecy, *that it is the word of life*. It is the only word which promises life, the only word which bestows it on fallen humanity. Recognizing no inevitable law of destruction but the sentence of God, no invariable law of nature superior to the counsel of Jehovah, nor any progress of events which his Almighty arm can not arrest and reverse, it points a despairing world to sin as the cause of all destruction, to Satan as the author of sin, to ungodly men in league with him as the foes of God and man, and to Christ pledged to perpetual warfare with such until the last enemy be destroyed. This word of prophecy tells us, that the battle-fields Messiah has won are earnest of that great victory; points to the columns which he has preserved erect amidst scenes of ruin, as assurances that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; goes to the grave-yards, where fallen Smyrnas, idolatrous Saxons, debased Sandwich Islanders, and cannibal New Zealanders have buried the image of the living God, and in Jesus' name proclaims, "*I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;*" and, amidst the very ruins of destroyed cities, and the crumbling heaps of their perished memorials, beholds the assurances that Satan's rule of ruin shall not be perpetual, anticipates the day when the course of sin and misery shall be reversed, and teaches Adam's sons to face the foe, and chant

forth that heaven-born note of victorious faith, "*O thou enemy! destructions are come to a perpetual end.*"

Come forth, trembling skeptic, from the cave of thy dark invariable experience of death and destruction, and from the vain sparks of thy misgiving hopes of an ungodly eternity to come less miserable than the past, and lift thine eyes to this heavenly sunrising on the dark mountain tops of futurity, the like of which thou didst never dream of in all thy Pantheistic reveries. Search over all the religions of the world—the hieroglyphics of Egypt, the arrow-headed inscriptions of Assyria, the classic mythologies of graceful Greece and iron Rome, the monstrous shasters of thine Indian Pundits, or the more chaotic clouds of thy German philosophies—in none of them wilt thou ever find this divine thought, *an end of destructions—a perpetual end.* Cycles of ruin and renovation, and of renovation and ruin, vast cycles, if you will, but evermore ending in dire catastrophes to gods and men—an everlasting succession of death and destructions, is the fearful vista which all the religions of man, and thine own irreligion, present to thy terrified vision. But thou wast created in the image of the living God, and durst not rest satisfied with any such prospect. Now I come in the name of the Lord to tell thee that, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him *should not perish, but have everlasting life*"—and I demand of thee that thou acknowledge this promise of life everlasting to be the word of that living God, and to show cause, if any thou hast, why thou dost relinquish thy birthright, and spurn the gift of everlasting life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

But, if thou hast no sufficient cause why thou shouldst choose death rather than life, then hear, and your soul shall live, while I relate the promises which God hath made of old to our fathers, and hath fulfilled to us their children, by raising up his Son Jesus Christ from the dead, and sending him to bless you, by turning away every one of you from your iniquities. For there can be no deliverance from misery and destruction but by means of delivery from sin and Satan.

It is quite in agreement with the manner of our deliverance from any of the evils of our fallen condition, that our deliverance from the power of sin and Satan be effected by the agency of a deliverer. Our ignorance is removed by the knowledge of a teacher—our sickness by the skill of a physician—the oppressed nation hails the

advent of a patriotic leader, and oppressed humanity acknowledges the fitness and need of a Divine deliverer, even by the ready welcome it has given to pretenders to this character, and by the longing desire of the wisest and best of men for a divinely-commissioned Savior—a desire implanted by the great prophecy, which stands at the portal of hope for mankind, in the very earliest period of our history, that “*the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head,*” and so leave man triumphant over the great destroyer.

The prophecies regarding the Messiah are so numerous, pointed, various, and improbable, as to set human sagacity utterly at defiance; while they are also connected so as to form a scheme of prophecy, which gradually unrolls before us the advent, the ministry, the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord, the progress of his gospel over all the world, and the blessed effects it should produce on individuals, families, and nations. It closes with a view of the second coming of Jesus to conquer the last of his enemies, and take possession of the earth as his inheritance. I can only lop off a twig or two from this blessed tree of life, in the hope that the fragrance of the leaves may allure you to take up the Bible, and eat abundantly of its life-giving promises. As I have in the three previous Tracts abundantly proved the veracity of the New Testament history, I shall now with all confidence refer to its account of the birth, life, and death of Jesus, as illustrating the prophecies.

The time, the place, the manner of his birth, his parentage and reception, were plainly declared, hundreds of years before he appeared.

When Herod had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born, and they said unto him, “in Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: *‘And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.’*” The first verse of this chapter records the fact, “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.”*

The throne of Judah was to be occupied by strangers, and the line of native princes was to cease upon the coming of this Gover-

* Matthew, chap. 2.

nor, and not till his coming: "*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come, and to him shall the gathering of the people be.*" On the day of his crucifixion the rulers of the Jews made this formal and public announcement of the fact, "We have no king but Cæsar." *

He was to address a class of people whom no other religious teacher had condescended to notice before, and very few save those sent by him ever since: "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*" Hear Jesus' words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Go and tell John those things ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he who-soever shall not be offended in me." †

Yet, notwithstanding his feeding of thousands, and healing of multitudes, and teaching of the lowest of the people, it was foretold he should be unpopular: "*He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He is despised, and we esteemed him not.*" The brief records are: "Then all his disciples forsook him and fled." "Then began Peter to curse and to swear, saying, 'I know not the man.' Pilate saith unto them, 'Ye have a custom that I release unto you one at the passover: will ye, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews?' Then they all cried again, saying, 'Not this man, but Barabbas.' Now Barabbas was a robber." ‡

All the prophets agree in predicting that for the sins of his people, and to atone for their guilt, he should be put to death by a shameful public execution: "*In the midst of the week Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bore the sin of many, and he made intercession for the transgressors. They pierced my hands and my*

* Gen., 49: 10. John, 19: 15.

† Isaiah, 61. Matthew, 11: 2.

‡ Isaiah, 53: 3. Matthew, 26: 56, 74; 27: 15. John, 18: 40.

feet." * The record says: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, '*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*'"

The one grand unparalleled fact, one which demands the hope of dying men for a victory over the great destroyer, and a resurrection from the tomb—the fact that one man born of a woman died, and did not see corruption, but rose again from the dead and went up into heaven, and dieth no more—forms the theme of many a prophetic psalm of triumph: "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt thou give thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life. Thou wilt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Thou hast ascended on high. Thou hast led captivity captive.*" Often did Jesus predict this prodigy before friend and foe: "*Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, when he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'*" The last chapters of the gospels relate the proofs by which he convinced his incredulous disciples that the prophecy was fulfilled: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he saith unto them, '*Have ye here any meat?*' And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey comb. And he took it and did eat before them; and said unto them, '*Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And while he was blessing them he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?*"

* Daniel, 9: 26. Isaiah, 53: 5, 12. Psalm 22: 16. Matthew, 20: 28. Luke, 23: 33.

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' " *

With your own eyes you shall see the fulfillment of this prophecy. Every eye shall see him. The clouds of heaven shall then reveal the vision now sketched on the page of revelation: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.' And he that sat upon the throne said, '*Behold, I make all things new.*' And he said unto me, '*WRITE, FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL.*'

* Psalm 16: 10; 68: 18. Matthew, 28: 63. John, 20: 24. Luke, 20: 36. Acts, 1: 9.

NOTICE.

April, 1857.

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